



A unique and innovative play space has been created at Coombe Country Park, near Coventry, in the West Midlands. Coombe Country Park is a Capability Brown designed landscape that attracts over 400,000 visitors each year, many of them being children, that see Play as a visitor attraction.

The 'CLIMBING FOREST' structure, also known as the 'Coombe Play Forest' has been more than 12 months in the design process, involving the City of Coventry, Coombe Country Park and Timberplay. Installation began in March 2006 for the 2nd phase, which was completed for use in early May 2006, and official opened in June 2006.

It is the second installation completed by Timberplay at Coombe Country Park. This time around, the brief was to provide a high use play concept that fitted into a Historic Landscape and Woodland Setting, to challenge the general concept of Play in the UK, and to create something exciting where the children need to be 'Risk Aware'. We wanted a progressive Play Facility that appealed to older children (10+) but could also help young children to develop skills.'

We have achieved a very naturalistic Play Space, set in a perfect woodland setting, there is nothing like this in the UK that is openly available to local children, where they don't have to pay or be supervised! Coombe have a strong understanding about 'Risk & Play' and we are sure they will reap the rewards of an adventurous Play Space.

Coombe Country Park summarised, 'We've seen late teens and early 20's using the Play Forest along side 9 and 10 year olds whizzing around it! It's 'ON THE BUTTON', the only downside is that we would like it to be bigger. We heard the kids say stuff like 'Wonderful' and 'Fantastic'.'

The whole structure of the Climbing Forest is individually designed for the specific location; the timbers used retain their natural shape, and are selected in such a way that they fit the overall design. The different shapes of the timbers correspond to the different degrees of difficulty of climbing. The oak timbers (which are planed and prepared by hand) seem to 'grow up' from the ground. These are linked using high performance steel-cored rope wires, bridges and nets. The children use these to negotiate around the Play Space at their own pace.

Coombe Country Park